Miserere Cleri.

A SERMON,

PRESENTING THE

MISERIES of the CLERGY,

AND

Assigning their true Causes in order to Redress:

Preached before the Right Honourable Sir *John Vaughan* Knight, Lord Chief Justice of His Majesties Court of Common Pleas, and Sir *John Archer* Knight, one of the Justices of the same Court.

In the Cathedral of Saint *Peter*, *Exon*, at the Assizes, on *Sunday*, *July* 26. 1668.

By EDW. WETENHALL,

one of the Prebendaries of that Church

Εἰ ἐν τῇ ζωῇ ταύτῃ ἠλπικότες ἐσμὲν μόνον, ἐλεεινότεροι πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἐσμέν.

In the *SAVOY*,

Printed by *T. N.* for *James Collins*, and are to be sold by *Abisha Brocas* Book-seller in *Exon*.

1668.

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To the Right Worſhipful

JOHN TUCKFIELD Eſq.

Sheriff of the County of *Devon.*

SIR,

Were it not an unpardonable tranſgreſſion of Decorum to inſinuate any thing I preſent to you on common inducements, I ſhould (which moſt juſtly I might) have uſed the ordinary ſtyle of Dedications, and ſaid, The Vaſt Obligations, which you have laid upon me, require ſome publick teſtimony of gratitude, and I could never evidence it more properly than by making that yours, of which you were an Auditour in ſo publick a capacity.

But I had rather the world ſhould know I am ignorant where to find a ſurer Patron for a Diſcourſe of this ſubject; and that your real Zeal and fidelity to the Eccleſiaſtical laws, order and preſent conſtitution, renders you, firſt a refuge of the conſtant and faithful ſons of the Church, and then of whatſoever ſpeaks ſuch faithfulneſs. Where therefore I am aſſured of ſo true affection to the

Clergy, I cannot doubt but their Miseries will find easie Pity, and their Mournings Patronage: And this is the true reason which gives you the Trouble of this Address.

If there should be any expression in what I hastily meditated (as my necessary imploiments at present enforce) which should disgust any, and create wonder that your name should be used to authorise ought so harsh, you may be pleased to answer (what is most true) That you knew neither of the Printing nor Dedication hereof till the sight of it surprized you; That I am a man presumptuous upon my friends, and had the boldness to reckon you one of the chief; That I did this (for what you know) on mine own head, and, possibly, carried away herein by an uncontroleable ambition of publishing my self happy that I can pretend to be,

Sir,

Of your servants (though) the meanest,

Exon. Aug. 1. 1668.

Edw. Wetenhall.

Miſerere Cleri.

A Sermon preached in the Cathedral of St *Peter, Exon.* on the Aſſize-*Sunday*, *July* 26. 1668.

The Text JEREM. XV. 10.

Wo is me my Mother, that thou haſt born me a Man of ſtrife and contention to the whole earth: I have neither lent on Uſury, nor have men lent to me on Uſury, yet every one of them do curſe me.

PAtience doth not exclude a ſenſe of Miſery, nor contentedneſs ever ſeal up the lips againſt all complaints. There may as well be on ſome ſeaſons a querulous meekneſs as a patient grief: and the ſuffering Saints we in Scripture read of, have little leſs obliged mankind by their ſeeming indulging ſome eruption of paſſions, which ſhews us what innocently we may do, than by their bounding and temperating ſuch indulgences, which teacheth us what we ought to do. Truly, as it is ſome comfort in our ſadneſs to ſee, that our elder brethren in our Lords houſe, have been in like condition with us, ſo it can-

not but erect and sweetly cheer our sinking minds, that we find them when in like condition, to have been also of like passions with our selves.

The Man *Moses*, in his more constant temper, was the meekest man on earth: yet, when surprized by the hateful prospect of his peoples idolatries and revolt, in a transport of indignation he broke the Tables, which not onely the most sacred Law in them written, but the writing of the Almighties own finger had hallowed.

We have heard too of the Patience of *Job*, who though he never in all his misery charged God fooliſhly, yet after the anguish of seven days and seven nights, when his grief was very great, and none spake a word unto him, then opened his mouth, and cursed his day. In which, though some Modern heads (for Ancients never did) have been pleased to conceive him to have sinned, yet who understand the holy Language know, that that *cursing* which the Original word there used signifies is only a light esteeming, vilifying, or speaking dishonourably of: and who understand Poetry will be apt to think the whole Chapter, which is supposed to contein that malediction, is onely a Tragick Threnody or lofty lamentation of his unhappy self: which not improbably may teach us, that Big griefs may be allowed not onely to sigh, but to sigh deep as themselves, and flow in Language which may seem as swoln, as the brests from whence it came.

Hereof another president we have in the present Prophet, if not so innocently Chap. 20. 15. yet in the text surely without any other guilt, than that of frailty and humane infelicity. His eyes and experience had been sad witnesses of the publike corruption and loosness of the age: Divine inspiration had acquainted him of the approaching desolation of *Jerusalem*, and captivity of its inhabitants: Himself had denounced to them this dreadful doom, and, that he might have prevented it, with all passionateness and instance conjured them to repentance,

but

but, alas! without ſucceſs: He had beſides with the utmoſt profuſion of affections, and all ſenſible expreſſions thereof lamented their imminent calamity, wiſhing *his Eyes might run down with tears night and day* inceſſantly, uſing the ſweeteſt terms, and ſtyling them *the Virgin daughter* of his people, who were moſt lewdly idolatrous and meretricious, and yet could neither, notwithſtanding the authority with which he came, perſwade the people 'twas true he ſaid, nor with all his tears induce them to think he was concerned touching their certain miſery. Finally, he had, with the moſt efficacious arguments he could imagine, pleaded and ſtriven with God for mercy in their behalf, and found him as inflexible as them; his anſwer not being onely a denial, but a proteſtation of reſolute obſtinacie: *Though Moſes and Samuel ſtood before me, ſaith the Lord, yet ſhould not my mind be turned toward them, but I would caſt them out of my ſight.* And after all this, his ſucceſsleſneſs, both with them and the Almighty, the ſole reception, which all his paſt pains and preſent Zeal found, was, from the people, Oppoſition, hatred, and revilings, and from God further imployment in his thankleſs and (as to him it ſeemed) not onely bootleſs but vexatious office. All which ſeeing, and not apprehending himſelf on one ſide or t'other likely to do good, being now ſadly taught by his own particular experience, what *Solomon* before in general delivered, that *The day of death is better than the day of birth*, as unable in ſilence longer to contein ſuch agonies of anguiſh, he burſts out, *Wo is me my mother, that thou haſt born me a ſon of ſtrife and contention to the whole earth. I have neither*, &c.

I wiſh it were not obvious to parallel amongſt us *Jeremie*'s caſe, and that not in a particular perſon or two, but in a publick body. Who inherit his office, inherit his miſery: and we of the Miniſtry of the Church of *England*, who are faithful to her laws and intereſt, may, and ſurely many of us often have not unjuſtly taken up this lamen-

tation, *Wo is me my mother*, my mother the Engliſh Church, *that thou haſt born me a ſon of ſtrife and contention to the whole earth.* We have neither practiſed *extortion* nor *oppreſſion*, I could wiſh it could as truly be ſaid, we had never ſuffered either, *and yet the people curſe us.* Give me leave, I beſeech you, to conſider the *inducements* of this *lamentation*, and you ſhall not find it groundleſs. Give me leave to conſider the *lamentation it ſelf*, and it ſhall not appear exceſſive or exorbitant. Give me leave, laſtly, to conſider *its intent or deſign*, and I hope the whole will not be found uſeleſs.

Who acts without a reaſon acts not like a man; who without due reaſon, not at all like a ſober man. That therefore none may ſuſpect the juſtice or prudence of the Prophets complaint, I beſeech you attend unto its inducements (ſhall I ſay?) or inforcements; which were two; His preſent miſery, and its grounds. His miſery in being *a ſon of ſtrife and contention to the whole earth*, and *curſed by all the people.* The grounds hereof, negatively expreſt, *I have neither lent upon uſury, nor have men lent to me on uſury*: and poſitively inſinuated, *My mother hath born me a ſon of ſtrife and contention.*

As miſeries ſeldome come ſingle, ſo is it more than one, under which our Prophet groans. His words ſpeak him to have met with Contentious oppoſitions, ſcornful ſleights, and malicious ſlanders.

1. Firſt, he complains himſelf to be *a man* of ſtrife and contention to the whole earth, that is, to the Jewiſh world, all that of earth, to which he was yet known, or had to do with: Not, that he was a man given to ſtrifes, but that in the innocent and conſcientious diſcharge of his ſacred function he met with them from the impieties of men. Neither were the Courts oppreſt with his ſuits, nor the ſtreets with his raileries, nor the fields with his quarrels or riots: but while from God he *told Judah* of their tranſgreſſions, and Iſrael of their ſins and ſad approaching recompence

compence, while he would have perſwaded the world to grow better, and ſave juſtice the labour, and themſelves the pains of puniſhment, he is reputed by ſuch, who had no ſtomach to virtue, a man as it were made up of ſtrife: And while he is zealouſly concerned about their happineſs, and will not be put off with a ſingle or ſome few iterated repulſes, he is thought troubleſome for this his charitable and unwearied importunity, and branded by men, who were reſolved never to be guilty of changing to the better, for a contentious perſon; and *his* zeal, and *their* incorrigibleneſs gave him the trouble of one ſort of ſtriving, while he could not force himſelf to ſuffer them to periſh quietly.

Something of ſuch contentiouſneſs is common to all who are ſent on like errands with the Prophet. Men commonly prove not eaſie Proſelytes to holy Life: nor is it a ſmall contention of labour which thoſe muſt undergo whoſe buſineſs it is to mend the world. Cuſtome and ſelf-will are not the moſt flexile things; eſpecially, where variety of pleaſures and ſenſible glories perſwade the ſtiffeſt adhæſion to them. Indeed therefore every private Chriſtian is in ſome meaſure *a man of ſtrife:* for he that hath enemies, which he muſt engage and cannot eaſily vanquiſh, muſt either yield or contend for victory. But the Miniſtry, beſides the conteſts which they have with their own corruptions and other inviſible foes, common to them with the Chriſtian multitude, have many another ſtrife proper to their function.

1. They have a *ſtrife* with the Infidelity of men. Thoſe whom in other matters we finde ſufficiently credulous and eaſy, in Religion often we can perſwade but little. Alas! the practices of the age have rendred it, not only the common mode, but intereſt, to queſtion or reject the principles of Faith, to the end the braver minds, as they are thought, may not be precided, ſcope and advantage to defend their beloved Latitude of life: And thoſe very perſons

sons who will receive Novel curiosities upon conjectures and probable surmises of the very first Fundamentals of all Religion require demonstrations, and tolerable would our contention be, would they either acquiesce in them given, or not account every thing overthrown which they have been pleased to droll upon.

Not less (2.) are our contests with misbelief than with unbelief. The Enemy who sowed tares seems to have set out but little after the *good seeds-man*: and his evil seed both quickly sprung up, and hath all along been fruitful. Verily, hath he not servants still at work, whom while we strive to counter-work and suppress, are we not reputed men of strife: persons who by making a clamour of *damnable* doctrines stirre up the Magistrate to persecutions and severities, and who obstruct the happy liberty and flourishing of the Kingdome? That is, in truth, who at present (and 'tis but a little) stand in some mens way, that they cannot do the mischief they would, or make the world as vitious, giddy and unhappy as themselves. A sad thing that such liberty should be denied men!

But (3.) we are yet further *men of strife*, for we have daily contests with the evil manners of the world, and are studying and striving with all our might and main, to bring Godliness and Honesty, and Temperance and Charity into publick fashion, and, if it might be, universal practice. In prosecution of which design, we many times meet with other contention, besides that of labour. For when men cannot slight Gods worship, or cheat or revel, or maintain malice, but they must hear of it, it is no wonder if they, who quarrel with reformation of life, entreat not well such who would reform them.

But that which makes this strife so irksome, and, as it were, impregnates it with woe, is, its frequent unsuccessfulness, and notwithstanding perpetual incumbency Men will not be perswaded to *Faith*, to *soundness*, to Virtue, yet still must we strive on, and call and conjure and every

every way struggle to reclaim their disobedient and gain-saying minds. And, speed or not speed, cease we must not: Our being quiet were to betray those who count us contentious for speaking, and, our very silence would cry for vengeance on our selves, whatever it would bring on them who are so fond on it. Is not then this our work and function, as the case stands, a real misery. If we hold our peace, albeit after rejection, we are found guilty. A *necessity is laid upon me, and wo is me, if I preach not the Gospel.* If we preach, we generally stirre up the minds of such against us, whose vices we have taxt; we embroil our selves in fresh heats, and, Wo is me, for thus, I become *a man of strife and contention.*

But I will be bold to avouch this strife innocent, though troublesome, and of most worthy and profitable design. 'Tis onely great vice which makes our work strife and then is pleas'd to brand us for contentious; who in truth, in all these contests are but dutiful towards God, and towards men charitable and compassionate. And, being the strife, which exerciseth us, is of this nature, give me leave to say, 'Tis such which will not misbecome persons of the greatest honour and interest to assist us in. The sword of peace, and they who bear it, may do much for the abating the heat of these conflicts, which chiefly, I say, riseth from the boldness, and that boldness from the impunity of vice. Let me therefore humbly crave that no opportunity may be omitted which offers it self for the punishment of Irreligious, unsound and lewd persons. With these, alas! the poor Prophets have striven, and striven long many of us, and unsuccessfully, and are for our labours, onely reputed *men of contention.* But when persons of power interpose, the engagement will not be to them matter of strife, but victory. He that threatens and cannot strike, becomes ridiculous by his impotence: and they who have enjoyed long impunity easily contemn future vengeance, which their experience tempts them to think

will

will be ever future. But he who checkes ill manners and together can and will puniſh them, is alone by audacious offenders reputed to *ſpeak with Authority:* and pardon me, I beſeech you, whoever may think your ſelves concern'd, if I again requeſt you ſo to ſpeak, where your own prudence and fidelity, not my impertinence ſhall direct.

I ſhall account my ſelf to have ſaid enough to the Clergies, being men *of ſtrife and contention*, when I have deſired my brethren to be men of no other *ſtrifes*, than thoſe I have alledged to engage all of us in common. It is an hateful thing to ſee any man frequent at Courts, ſave thoſe who come thither to ſerve their Country (and their feet I could even kiſs that they bring them thither) but of all men to ſee a Miniſter wear out his ſhooes, or tire his horſe by going to *Weſtminſter*, or every aſſize is moſt abominable. Neceſſity indeed may acquit, grand convenience excuſe; Jealouſies, projects, or ſelf-pleaſing humours are no Pleas of innocence but guilt.

2. Our Prophets ſecond miſery, which preſſed from him this *Wo is me*, was ſcornful ſlights and Undervaluings. For we muſt know, if we take curſing ſtrictly for malicious imprecations, the rendring, *Every one curſeth me*, is not the moſt exact: the word original not being oppoſed to *bleſſing* but *honouring*. But in its Hebrew notion, as curſing many times ſignifies ſlighting, extenuating or contemptive language, (ſuch curſing as undutiful children are guilty of towards their parents, when they render to them diſreſpective terms where honourable ones are due) it is well admiſſible. And this it ſeems the Prophet was ſuppoſed to have met with in ſuch meaſure, that the Septuagint (though poſsibly miſtaking כָּלָה for קָלָה, and then ſupplying the ſuppoſed *Elipſis*) and others from them, have not doubted to render his words, *My ſtrength hath failed me amongſt thoſe that curſe me.*

Our ſtrength indeed fails us not yet, becauſe there is ſuch a thing as hope, not only that the contemptuous world

world may in time bethink themſelves of better manners, but that there is a bleſsing which awaits thoſe, who have been reviled for Righteouſneſs ſake: and we are apt to think, that to be ſlighted for being Miniſters, that is, Embaſſadours of Chriſt to perſwade men to their own happineſs and trueſt intereſt; may be adjudged a caſe of righteouſneſs in one world or t'other. But yet can we not at preſent (and alas moſt pertinently) take up that the old Churches bemoaning addreſſe, *Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us, for we are exceedingly filled with contempt. Our ſoul is exceedingly filled with the Scorning of thoſe that are at eaſe, and with the contempt of the proud*; to whom notwithſtanding we beſeech thee, Lord, to render nothing but *Mercy*, *Pardon*, and *Repentance*.

There is yet more of miſery which brought *Jeremy*, thus as it were before his time to his *Lamentations*. To oppoſitions and affronts were added ſlanders of no leſs malice than forgery and impudence. *Come*, ſaid they, and *let us deviſe deviſes againſt Jeremiah. — Come, let us ſmite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed unto any of his words.* His words were the precepts of heaven and rules for holy living: now theſe becauſe they had no minde to entertain or ſuffer, they reſolve on the deviſing ſome ſcandal to caſt on his perſon, and ſo to blaſt his Miniſtery whom they could not ſilence. 3.

Oh! that there were but ſo much Innocence in the age, that I wanted a parallel to this impious Stratagem! But is it not as clear as the Sun, that now when Religion it ſelf hath been long decryed as a fondneſs, and the idol of weaker reaſons, by men who pretend to have engroſſed all maſculine wiſdom; when Chriſtianity (to ſay nothing of Chriſt its founder) hath been publickly affronted by ſuch who ſeem to reckon drollery, ſcorns and lewdneſs, the only excellencies of the rational life, and yet both Religion in the general and Chriſtianity particularly, ſeemed ſtill in the poſſeſſion of their ancient authority and eſteem, not

only the people being generally tenacious of them, but there being a certain order of men, of learning, gravity and ſome influence upon the multitude, whoſe buſineſs it is both to defend and propagate this holy doctrine; perſons of the Character now given, have made it their work to draw an *Odium* and contempt on that Order, moſt vily aſperſing ſome (and making but a jeſt of it, when they had done) and involving the whole body in more general imputations, which would be ſure to blaſt their repute and intereſt, wherever thoſe imputations could be received, and ſo make their teſtimonies of little effect to promote virtue, which it is before hand inſinuated, they have no regard for themſelves.

This, this then being our condition, that our work is perpetual contention with the infidelity, factiouſneſs, ſchiſms, and other ill manners of men, and, which renders this the more troubleſome, that though we have long without ſucceſs contended, we muſt ſtill with utmoſt vigour proceed, that notwithſtanding all our old and preſent buſying our heads, and concerning our very ſouls for men, beſides oppoſition we receive, all abroad, moſt bitter ſlights, are reputed as the filth of the world and the moſt impertinent of all things, a ſort of men who were found in the world and muſt live, but are permitted to live onely clouded with a multitude of black aſperſions; This, I ſay, being the condition of the very chief of us and all in common, what can be expected more naturally from us, if we may be ſuppoſed to attend unto our miſery, than *Woe is me my Mother that thou haſt borne me a man of ſtrife and contention to the whole earth!*

But bleſſed be God, it is to Earth only that we are reputed ſuch: (Our *contention* being in the cauſe of *Heaven*, we have it our Friend.) And not to *every* one *on earth* neither, but to ſuch onely who bear the Character of Earth (are [illegible]) ſons of Violence or obſcurity, the meaner or worſer ſort, as earth the dregs of nature, and

ſuch

ſuch whoſe ſouls ſeem made of mud too, as minding onely earthly or more vile things. There are ſome more generous and heaven-born minds (and I am confident I ſpeak before ſeveral ſuch at preſent) who having renounced the hidden things of diſhoneſty and diſhonourableneſs, all *infidely*, and bad principles and vileneſs, both ſtand up for the worſhip of God, and think a ſlovenly and diſorderly worſhip not worthy his glory; who are not fond to ſee their prieſts in rags, nor the faces or of them or theirs pale with leanneſs. The Lord give mercy unto ſuch in that day. And to all ſuch, who are conſcious to themſelves of ſo worthy minds (and it is not our fault if any be not) we in all humility addreſſing our ſelves, beſeech, what we complain of as the reception we find from the generality, none of them think in the leaſt to reflect upon himſelf. Even in the text, thoſe general words [*A man of contention to the whole earth*, and, *Every one of them*, or rather *All them*, that is the generality, and ſome of all ſorts, *curſe me*] were not intended by *Jeremiah* to deſign the whole humane nature, no, nor all of the Jewiſh nation. There were of them that hid *Jeremiah* and *Baruch*, and ſtood as a skreen between him and the wrath of the King. There were that viſited him in the dungeon, and lift him thence, and brought him again unto the King, and procured favour and kinder uſage for him. And verily, *Except the* Lord had left unto us ſuch a remnant, we ſhould have been as Sodom, and we ſhould have been like unto Gomorrah. But bleſſed be him that remembred us in our low eſtate, and hath made Kings our nurſing Fathers, and Queens our nurſing Mothers; Inſomuch that ſtill our remnant, God be thanked, is larger much than was that of the Prophets friends: And we hope he will yet remember us. For truly, ſuch ſtill is our low eſtate (if to be matter of the common trample be to be low) that we need the conſtancy and endeavours of all our friends, were they more numerous much than they are. And in confidence of the kind reception of what we ſpeak

to ſuch, we will adventure to lay our miſery yet farther open, by proceeding unto its grounds, firſt, Negatively expreſſed in the text, *I have neither lent on uſury, nor have men lent to me on uſury.*

I intend not here at all to enter upon the common place of Uſury: It ſhall ſuffice onely to ſay, that the Old Uſury in practice amongſt the Jews was widely different from that which our Law permits. The precept which allowed it to them was ſo far from ſetting bounds to their avarice, that it ſeems to have enlarged its mouth, at leaſt as *ſin took occaſion by the law*. For the Law determining Uſury lawful to be exacted onely upon Gentiles, not brethren Jews (and moſt probably on the ſeven Nations, whom God had commanded them to afflict and caſt out, though afterwards, for their puniſhment, he ſuffered the remains of them to co-inhabit the Holy Land with his people) the Jews thought themſelves not onely allowed but in a ſort obliged (by the precept of afflicting them) by all means to extort from them all they could. Hence it came to paſs that where-ever they lent on uſury (which by degrees they did to other than thoſe ſeven Nations, indeed to any whoſe needs made them borrowers) they made all the advantages they could on the neceſſity of the borrower, and oppreſſion, extortion or grinding the face of the poor, became the ſame thing with Uſury, as not onely the Hebrew, but many of the Oriental names for Uſury ſtill import. Whereas I ſuppoſe our laws which ſtate Uſury puniſh Extortion. Whence it is concluſible, that they who urge texts of the Old Teſtament with ſo much heat againſt the preſent *Uſe* amongſt us, do not ſpeak *Ad idem*, if *ad idem nominis*, not *rei*.

Now as to the Clergy in this caſe, I wiſh fa re the greateſt number of them were as able to purge themſelves of the latter clauſe, that they have not *taken on uſury*, as they are of the former, that they have not *lent*.

But to quit the whole matter in ſo ſtrict an acception. It is the obſervation of a learned Textuary, that under the

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one kind of Borrowing and Lending, he compriſes all other matters which men uſe to tranſact among themſelves in point of dealing or Traffick. And ſo undoubtedly the ſumme of what the Prophet meant is more general; yet reducible to theſe two points: He had neither been guilty in any caſe of rigorous *exaction* of what was his own, nor of *Detention*, or undue holding, what was anothers: No one had matter of *contention* with him in things of this nature, nor could for theſe any man *curſe him*.

I am ſure for the Clergy generally I have the ſame plea to enter.

1. It is not for any Extortion or ſevere Exaction that we meet with ſuch oppoſition and obloquy as what at preſent we labour under. I know indeed there are who account receiving of Tithes, and ſuch revenues, which antient nurſing Fathers and Mothers bequeathed to the Church, to be Exaction. But ſuch muſt pardon us if we think what bounty gives, indigent induſtry may harmleſly receive, and further crave, it may be thought hard, that ſuch, who will not give us any thing themſelves, ſhould ſeek to take away from us the antient Donations of others. I have heard that they who have been unqueſtionably learned in the Law, have ſaid, that he underſtands not how he holds his Lands, who thinks his Tithes his own: and that there is not the Family now in being, which can plead in an uninterrupted line to have enjoyed any Poſſeſſions neer ſo long as the Church hath done this of Tithes: much leſs which hath had *revenues* ſettled by half ſo many Statutes and legal Securities as theſe. But as to this of *Tithes* and other Church-revenues, I ſhall onely be bold to ſpeak in my own Profeſsion, uſing too the words of one vaſtly abler than my ſelf therein. That God accepts of things given him and ſo holds a Propriety, as well in the New as Old Teſtament, and, That God gets this Propriety in thoſe things he holds, as well by an acceptation of what is voluntarily given, as by a command that ſuch things Dr. *Hammond.*

ſhould be preſented to him is moſt clear from Scripture. The known caſe of *Ananias* and *Sapphira* will prove it. And that he accounts himſelf to receive by the hands of his ſervants who want it, is no leſs evident from that paſſage, *I was hungry and ye fed me, naked and ye clothed me, ſick and ye viſited me, &c.* In a word, it is as much as if he ſaid, Food, Raiment, and Neceſſaries, as well in ſickneſs as in health, ye the true Righteous Ones have provided for me: ye have, as farre as was poſſible to you, provided for me the Head (who abſolutely in my ſelf am above the ſphere of your bounty) while your *goodneſs*, which could *not extend to me*, hath imparted *to the Saints* my members *which are on earth*. And we cannot ſuppoſe (as my incomparable Authour proceeds) that he would take meat, and refuſe revenues, or like being fed and clothed to day, and being in danger to be ſtarved to morrow. No more can we think, that the wanting perſons in whom he accounted himſelf to be fed, clothed and ſupported were only Laicks, as we ſpeak, perſons to be inſtructed, not at all their inſtructers: For it were a ſtrange thing to affirm, Chriſt liked it extreme well to be fed and clothed in all His but onely his Apoſtles or Seventy Diſciples. Beſides touching them expreſly he ſpeaks, *He that receiveth you receiveth me*, &c. *Matth.* 10.40, *&c.* In ſumme then, it was lawful for thoſe antient Saints, our Founders and Benefactours to give: it was not onely a lawful but good work, for they have rewards promiſed and approportioned to them for their giving: and further, their giving makes the things given Gods, that is, the Churches his Proxy. Our laws ſettle the Donation: where then is the Exaction in Receiving? The rigour with which any exact their dues, together with the (ſeemingly) unhandſome management of ſuch matters, if the particular neceſſitous conditions of ſuch perſons and the provocations of the deteinours do not excuſe or alleviate, yet may not be extended beyond the particular perſons guilty, and ſo is no crime of the body.

It

It is evident then, that 'tis not for *Exactions* that we fare or hear thus hardly.

And the reflexion on what we have ſaid will evince, that it is not (2.) for unjuſt Detention neither. For if what we hold be, both by the law of God and our good Kings, our own, we cannot be ſaid, for holding it, deteinours of anothers. Poſſibly ſome may ſay, all was not given us to raiſe to our ſelves voſt eſtates, to live in the greateſt pomp, ſplendour, and eaſe; but after neceſſary ſuſtenance of our ſelves, to feed the hungry, to cloth the naked, and entertain indigent ſtrangers, and not ſolely our rich friends. I moſt gladly grant all this: and certainly there are not a few of the able Clergy who do this, only they deſire to be excuſed if they do not ſound trumpets to it; and as to thoſe, who being able do it not, I know no man of ſo baſe a ſpirit as to undertake their defence.

There may be haply ſome who may account gratitude next to charity, and ſay, not unreaſonably, we ſhould out of our abundance conſider more liberally ſuch who have ſuffered for us. Alas! ſhould every ſuffering Friend of the Church be according to merit gratified out of its revenues, the whole would not ſuffice to pay that one debt. And if any alledge we have found wherewith to gratifie enemies, let that onely lie at the door of the guilty, and then I am ſure it will lie nor at all nor at moſt of the Clergies; amongſt whom, if where there is an impotence of paying other thanks, prayers and love, and honour, and offices of kindneſs and Chriſtianity, might be reckoned as acts of gratitude, I hope there are very few will be found ungrateful. Notwithſtanding even theſe charges therefore, the generality of us can moſt truly ſay, that if we lie under contempt and infamy, and are ſtruck at by any at preſent, it is not either for *Exaction* or *Detention*. What the Clergy receives or holds at preſent is juſtly theirs; nor is it evident, the premiſes being conſidered, how any other can receive or hold the ſame without *Sacriledge*.

I have done with what is not the cause of our Misery: but I said something of what is its cause was positively insinuated in the text, and so it is in those words, *My Mother thou hast born me a Man of strife and contention.*

Infants indeed when born, they say, cry: but their little wrangles have more of Misery than Contention: How then had his Mother born him such? Or why cries he out of an innocent Parent? Was she accessary to his Misery, because instrumental to his being? No: this was not it. *Jeremiah*, we must know, was the son of *Hilkiah* of the Priests that were in *Anathoth* in the land of *Benjamin:* and being the son of a Priest he was so farr forth born a Priest; for as such he was actually to be admitted as soon as by age serviceable for his office. The summe then of what he complains of, as from his Mother was, Because thou hast born me *a Priest, thou hast born me a Man of strife and contention.* And all us who were from our Births by providence destin'd to the same Office, seem also set forth as men appointed to the like Misery; Persons who have an Office devolv'd upon us to tell men of their faults, to awaken a thing call'd *Conscience*, which the luxury and affected liberty of the age hath no mind to hear; and besides this are to live upon Tithes, or that more envied matter Church-revenues. Ah! hence, hence are we *Men of contention* and *cursed* by the multitude. But part of this Misery hath been already toucht, and the rest perhaps it is better silently to devour, than to let the world hear of it, least any should be angry also that we feel it.

Are there then no causes of this your Misery amongst your selves? will some say: none too, which argue gu lt on your side?

Alas! if *I knew none* yet would I not justifie us; for he that judgeth is the Lord. But there are faults, and those too visible, though haply not the same with them which are commonly charged upon us. To wit,

1. Fawning and base Compliances for advantage or quiet;

quiets ſake is a fault many of us cannot acquit our ſelves of. This, as ſoon as perceived, blaſts our authority with the perceiver, and expoſeth us to contempt: and 'tis ſure, Contemne me this moment, and hate me the next, and then immediately enter all the conſequents of conceived hate, Oppoſitions, calumnies, affronts, &c. Again,

2. Affectation of too ſplendid and courtly living is no friend nor virtue of many of the Clergy. Courtly living I call that, when we cannot furniſh our houſes nor tables, but both appear emulous of thoſe of Noblemen; and the clothes our families wear, or faſhions they go in, are ſuch that our neighbours of beſt condition are fain to ſtretch their eſtates, and perhaps be as laviſh of their time, to dreſs and go ſo fine as ours do. This expoſeth us to envy, as the other to contempt, and an envied perſon can never live without oppoſers and detractours.

3. Another fault amongſt us which begets us no love is Vain-glory, and derogating from others of our brethren to adde unto our ſelves. We make one another *curſed*, that is meanly or evil ſpoken of, becauſe ſome of us have a mind to fly loftier in the mouths of men than we do deſerve. Some of us would have our parts admired, and others our pains, and others ſomewhat elſe: and accordingly when we meet with opportunities to our minds we ſlily inſinuate, ſuch a mans preaching is at beſt dull and liveleſs, ſuch and ſuch are lazy and more ſtudious of the fleece than flock, &c. And few hearers now-adays but can underſtand the perſons deſigned, by general characters, without particular names or indigitations. Thus in Cathedrals we hear our ſelves called lazy, by many who cannot be ignorant we miniſter weekly elſewhere, but are willing, to the end their diligence may be admired, that the people ſhould think we never preach but when in our courſes (which thoſe onely who ſeldomeſt come here, think moſt ſlowly to return) we ſerve this audience. I have no mind to exagitate, or drive this general through all the ſeverals I might: but in ſumme,

it is no wonder if when we bring *railing accusations* (though cunningly) against one another, the people at least learn thus much, that they say after us.

4. Further, No small occasion of Evil and Evil-speaking to us is the *seeking great things for our selves* and families. We profess to teach self-denial and contempt of secular glories: we therefore evidently contradict our selves when moderate provisions suffice us not. And the truth is; Grasping at too large estates is neither safe to us nor our posterity as to the general. Not to us, inasmuch as none can grow great without envy: (Whether St. *Hierome* spoke it out of Discontent or in sobriety, it is strangely sunk into most mens minds, as their practice speaks; *Clericum ex inope divitem, quasi quandam pestem fuge.*) Nor to our posterity, for wise men have observed that the children of Clergy-men, who have been with mean fortunes put into ways of living or thriving by their own industry, have more perpetuated their fathers names and honours, than those who having been amply bred have been left as amply provided for. Their parents have made them Gentlemen, and their own negligence Beggars. It is then more than double imprudence to venture mine own ruine, that I may expose my sons to the same fate. Lastly

5. I cannot deny, but there are amongst us who are guilty of encroachment upon the lower Clergy. The abuse of Dispensations and Pluralities in such cases where nothing but some mens insatiableness requires them, breeds many a negligent incumbent, many an unsufficient Curate, and a great deal of hate, obloquy and contempt to our whole order. But I am an unfit person to speak hereof, and say not what I would in this case, least, in any thing I say, discontent should seem to prompt me.

I might possibly enlarge this Catalogue on our side, but am more ways than one straitned. Onely I cannot but crave leave to adde, that there are several faults too on the side

of

of the people, which we are not at all accessary to, which notwithstanding bring vexation and reproaches in abundance on the most innocent of our body. I mention them not by way of upbraiding but as supplicating for their reformation.

1. First, it is certain that a luxurious age will never shine upon the Clergy: I onely wish this may not prove one.

2. Another evil no less mischievous to us, is, that the Multitude are and have been a long time venim'd with factious and schismatical principles, which late disorders have infused; and from this perverse abundance proceed answerable practices.

3. With the humour of these male-contents strike in those, who as good as profess to be of no religion, yet have told the world they can be of any; in hopes that if the on-both-sides-maligned Church should fall, they may share either in the booty, or liberty, which will accrue thereupon. And upon the whole from the *Genius* and infections of both ariseth an impossibility for us (especially if we stick to our engagements of conformity) generally to please. If we study to speak sense, and deliver what we have meditated without affectation, we are dull Preachers. If we play the *Zanies* and *Fack Puddings* in the Pulpit, weak people admire and sober loath both us and *the offerings of the Lord*. If we preach seldom, though well, we are idle: if frequently, we preach too often possibly to preach well. Thus,

Obstat, chare Pudens, postris ina turba libellis,
Lectorémque frequens lassat & implet opus.

Again, if we preach necessaries, that is, press Virtues and Holy life, we are onely Legal-Preachers: if we inveigh against popular vices we rail: but if against our Governours we please indeed a great (and I fear the greater) part, but then we become factious with them. And seriously, this very impossibility of pleasing (notwithstanding all our studies and prayers) I could almost protest makes me

alone well-nigh weary of my function: but I do confidently avow that this, occasioned as beforesaid is the first and chiefest cause of all our misery; of all the Oppositions, affronts, and ill reports we meet with.

4. The last rock, which I will point at, threatning us with wrack is the projections and contrivances of some who are taken (rather by themselves than other competent judges) for deep and prudent men. They could, in short, better mold the laws (Civil and Ecclesiastical) relieve the Subject, promote publick interests, were those laid aside, who stand so importunately to this, that one Religion or Profession of it should in this Church lord it over all other.

As to the first case; that men should still be attempting the amendment of our Frame of Government, I confess I am truly amaz'd. Good God! Are we not yet weary of *Rota's?* Have we not been tumbled yet often enough *from one vessel to another?* Surely it is now at length time to settle, if all of us in stead of brains wear not quicksilver. The Ancients accounted our Country one of the *Fortunate Islands:* Truly it would soon be such, if its inhabitants would once cease their *Eutopian* Projects.

As to the other of relieving the Subject by the ruine of the Church, I had almost said, it is the grossest abuse of God, Religion and the Truth, and besides of the King and People, that can be imagined. *In omni Religione nihil tale sine Vindicta* was of old the aged and learned *Lactantius* his observation. And can we think, if there be any Truth in Religion or the being of a God, that he, who hath ever avenged the cause of mock-gods, when sacriledge hath been committed on what was devoted to them, will be less Zealous in his own honour and cause? Give me leave a little, I beseech you: What is become of greater revenues alienated from the Church than those at present remaining to Cathedrals? Is the Crown richer for them? Or the people easier? Or would what is left satisfie? And how long?

You ſee I repreſs my ſelf: and to the end you may conceive our Miſery is great, I ſhall onely adde, that beſides what we have lamented to you, there is yet much remaining which we keep to our ſelves, intending our complaint ſhall be like *Jeremie's*, moderate not exorbitant, which I ſhall briefly touch on, as being the ſecond thing promiſed.

Our Prophet ſeeing ſo much contention, ſo much ſcorn, ſo much obloquy attend him, and that meerly becauſe of his Office and care in its diſcharge, which as to himſelf had ſo much pains and thankleſneſs in it, yet ſo happy a deſign as to others, thus bemoans himſelf, *Wo is me my Mother, that thou haſt born me a Man of ſtrife, &c.* In other words, Miſerable, woful man that I am! He doth not ſay, Wo is me that I was born, but *that I was born a man of ſtrife and contention*, that is, a Prieſt, and ſanctified from the womb to be a Prophet. He complains his office had much of *Wo* in it: and the premiſes conſidered, Had not his? Hath not ours? Yet,

1. As *Jeremy* did not, ſo neither do we relinquiſh our Office for its burden. Such regards of *Fame* we leave as proper to many of our *Factious Detractours*; being reſolved our ſelves *to bear* the Clouds as well as *Heat and burden of the day*. Being therefore we are (through Divine grace) thus reſolutely diligent in our Lords vineyard, we hope neither he nor any juſt judge will reckon it to us as a crime, that having ſuch a load on us, it preſſeth from our labouring hearts now and then a groan: Eſpecially when we

2. Do not (as nor here doth *Jeremy*) accuſe our God that he hath laid our burden ſo heavy. Poſſibly 'tis our unskilfulneſs or miſcarriage that hath, as to our ſenſe, inhanc't its weight: Our ſins haply have added unto its preſſure; and the load would ſit much eaſier were our ſhoulders better qualified, or had we laid aſide every other weight. At the worſt, the day haſtens apace when we (perſevering) ſhall *reſt from our labours*; and then, no more weight, but that

that of glory, which the present pressures (that then will seem, not onely light, but sweet in their memory and rewards) shall exceedingly and eternally adde unto. Wherefore as we faint not, so neither do we murmur or

3. Nor yet do we inveigh against men who thus load us with strifes, slights, and calumnies; except the meer letting them know their sins, ours as well as their own miseries, be so interpreted. And as long as thus only, with *Jeremy*, we complain, with all submission to God, meekness to men, and resolved diligence in our troublesome work, we trust we shall never be adjudged in any measure excessively querulous.

But if these be not expressions of discontent, what design have they? They have the same design as had *Jeremy*'s complaint in the Text, the View of which was the last thing propounded, and intended as the Application of all.

First then, as *Jeremy*, so we thus publish our miseries to bring men to Relentings of heart and to Repentance for these stubbornnesses and irreligiousnesses which will otherwise deprive them of Eternal life, as at present they hinder those, who design their happiness and *watch over their souls*, of a quiet life. This is the reason of our vehemency, and clamours, as some may esteem them. Alas! we have no displeasure, no enmity or quarrel with the persons of any men: we are adversaries onely to their adversaries, that is, their vices. Let men renounce but these, and we forthwith quit not onely all we seem'd to have against them, but our very opinion, sense, and complaints of our own above-lamented misery. We change our *Wo is me*, into *Blessed me*; and Blessed my mother that hast born me a man of so happy strife and contention; for I have *converted a sinner from the errour of his wayes*. Let me then most passionately importune and beg of our opposers and detractours, if not for their own sakes, and out of a regard to the immortal souls they wear, yet that out of ingenuity, out of generous and

good

good natures to which they generally pretend, they will a little abate of their affronts and contempts of religion, (for upon that fall all the sleights and reproaches which are cast on us for our Professions sake;) that they will think men, who are ready to lay down their life for the truth of it, believe really what they teach of the truth of Religion; that they will exercise so much of sobriety and good manners, as not always to answer, onely with laughter, serious reasons and demonstrations, in the verity of which ages and multitudes of most learned men have acquiesced; and not proceed to vex the souls of them, who most passionately desire their welfare, with such insolent tramplings.

Another design, which we may have in indulging these complaints, which it is not improbable too *Jeremy* might have in his eye, is, the putting our selves on a strict enquiry, whether we owe not our miseries to our crimes. The Prophet seems (I say) to have searched, when he pronounces, *I have neither lent on usury, nor have men lent to me on usury.* And I beseech, in all reverence, all my brethren, that I may speed in this design on them: if any of us particularly apprehend our selves *men of strife*, &c. in the sense insisted on, let such be pleased impartially to enquire, if themselves be guiltless as to their own misery. If they are not as to their own, it is certain they cannot be as to their brethrens. I know, none of those, whom at present I address my speech to, want abilities to suggest more heads of sacerdotal miscarriages then I have touched. Those abilities and divine grace, which will be wanting to none in such designs, improve to an honest scrutiny and Reformation, and it will undoubtedly much remedy both your own and others Woe.

A third design, which in these complaints we truly have, and *Jeremy* might have, is, to move Persons of Power and Place to our pity and Relief. Nor can I but perswade my self,

self, I have already sped in my request, where I am so confident justice dwells. The summe I crave is, all possible encouragement to serious Religion, and especially to the profession of it at present settled. With many, all Religion is decryed as an abuse of credulous mankind: with others, either the present Religion amongst us impugned or the strictness (as is pretended) of its present settlement. Now nothing can contribute so much to the interest of Religion in common as the countenance of great and grave persons. Nothing can do this particular profession of it more service than their vigorous adhæsion to its laws. And remember, I beseech you our late confusions: Can any sober man be fond on Hemms and Expletives and Non-sense for Prayers, of confused Noises for Praises, of Ruines for Churches, or blue Aprons, and such like cattle for Preachers. Behold the goodly majesty, yet gravity and modesty of our present Order: The place august; the prayers and Hymns certain, devout, complete; the Harmony full; they who minister, in a reverend decency, and each instructed and exercised in his faculty: The whole striking a sacred Awe and Veneration upon the Enterer, and so fitting him with an holy fear and transport of mind to fall down and worship the unseen *Beauty of Holiness*, the essential glory of the infinite God. Behold, I say, and consider all; and let your souls seriously deprecate and abhorre the day, that ever the *Axes* and the *Hammers* should be at work again in the Temple, except it be to repair its deficiencies, or that, for want of bread unto its Ministers, the glory of Mount *Sion* should become desolate, and as a *lodge in a garden of Cucumbers*.

In case these designs should fail (which God forbid) we have yet one more; and that is by this view of our miseries and these complaints and lamentations of it, to move our own, and all pious brests to a most affectionate ardour and intensness of Devotion, and thereby Him to pity, whose pity is together help, and alone powerful to turn our La-

mentations

mentations into Hallelujahs of joy, our fears into ſafety, and to make our *mountain ſtand faſt*. And to him are our eyes: *We have looked for peace, but behold tottering; for the time of healing, but behold trouble: See, O Lord, we beſeech thee, we are become vile. We acknowledge, O Lord, our iniquities and the iniquity of our forefathers, for we have all ſinned againſt thee, Yet do not thou abhorre us very much; For thy names ſake, do not diſgrace the throne of thy glory.* Or, if ſo it is decreed, for our ſins, that we ſhall be ſcattered, Scatter us, O Lord, but let our diſperſions intirely praiſe thee, and find us out ſome Wilderneſs where we may in *Order* if not *Decency*, ſing, *Glory be to the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt.*

Glory be to God on high, and on earth Peace,
Goodwill towards mankind.
Amen, Amen.

FINIS.

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